

Where have all the soldiers gone?

The selectmen, town manager, and conservation agent shot themselves in the foot when they took down the yellow ribbons at Round Pond. In a clumsy and petty attempt to put a damper on things they only stirred up passions. It's not so much that they removed them; it's how and when they removed them: cut down unceremoniously

EDITORIAL

by interns barely cognizant of their instructions and thrown into the trash just one day after the memorial became public knowledge. Why the haste?

They cite rules and regulations, but we wonder: If the ribbons were just ribbons – without the names – would they have been so quick on the clip? And then to shift blame to the interns, to portray them as so frightened they hightailed it to the transfer station, is more shuffling of the truth, and not very nice.

But there is disingenuousness enough to go around. Mr. Hardy has also said his actions were not political, yet he should have known he needed permission to tie those ribbons and didn't seek it. We think he should call good old-fashioned civil disobedience by its name. We applaud Mr. Hardy for his action, and wish that instead of saying a disembodied "he" told him to create the memorial, he'd come right out and say he hates this war and here are 632 reasons why. Mr. Hardy can hardly deny that anti-war sentiment leads to anti-The War President.

We realize that the town woods can't become a platform for the free speech movement. Everybody and his sister might get political and tie one on at Round Pond: Pro-The War President. Anti-The Axis of Evil. Pro-Save Our Spanish. Anti-All Day Kindergarten. Just think of the fomentation out there in the forest. On second thought, maybe that's a good idea. "Deluxebury" could use some more civil disobedience.

Mr. Hardy's memorial, however, was eloquent in its simplicity. No matter which side of the aisle a person is on, we need to remember the ones who sacrificed everything for this war. We may visit Round Pond and wonder where the ribbons have gone. As long as everyone remembers that to date, 907 soldiers have gone – as the song says – to graveyards, every one.

Petty bureaucracy is an embarrassment

Editor, *Duxbury Clipper*:

On Saturday, a Boston radio station broadcast the news that the Town of Duxbury has removed from the stately trees in our quiet town forest, the ribbons with the names of a number of young men who were killed believing that they were fighting to protect our many freedoms. I understand these names were thrown in the trash. That must make their families feel just great. It sickens me. I want to know who gave the order to do that, and what instructions were given as to the disposal. I

assume there were instructions.

Mr. Longo and Mr. Grady were quoted as saying that their cause for concern was that nobody asked permission. They seemed to feel this diminished their authority. Mr. Grady was also quoted as saying it could frighten children. I suppose that's what he meant by "spooked." The word political was also mentioned. Remembering young people dying is not a political statement.

The Town of Duxbury is rising to new heights of petty, petty bureaucracy. I'm tired

of trying to explain to people as far away as California who read humorous articles about the little town of Duxbury in their newspapers. It's embarrassing. After the cupcake taboo, the ribbons incident again demonstrates the mismanagement and insensitivity that calls down ridicule on our hometown.

Is this the quality of administration for which we pay the highest average property tax of any town on the South Shore? Surely we could do better.

Joan Gazin
Old Field's Lane

Officials' actions were short-sighted

Editor, *Duxbury Clipper*:

Several hundred soldiers who died serving this country in Iraq have now been cut down again. This town's officials have chosen to remove Ed Hardy's quiet, contemplative memorial to the victims of this country's most recent war. They asked two young people to do this work for them, and to throw this memorial in the trash. They did not wait to seek a dialogue with the memorial's creator, nor did they seek public debate on what is obviously a deeply-felt issue for the residents of this town, this state, this nation, and indeed the world.

Did this town's officials think before they acted? They will say they did. What, however, did they think about? It appears they thought about what control they could exert

over an event that surprised them. They found rules to enforce, and they enforced them.

What are the ethical consequences of cutting down a memorial to victims of terrorism, and to American and Iraqi victims of the current war?

Does Duxbury value the rules and regulations of its public land more than they do a powerful memorial to the country's fallen soldiers? Does Duxbury wish to be known as a town so fettered by bureaucracy that it runs roughshod over the honoring of this country's dead? I'm sure it does not. However, these considerations are among the many negative consequences of a rash and shortsighted act by town officials.

This path through the for-

est is a small and quiet one. The path cannot be driven to, and is not easily seen. The nonpolitical memorial built along this path was intended to be meditative, as its content deserved. It was not advertised in any way so that whoever discovered it, as indeed people did, could have a deeply personal experience. Each tree held a ribbon bearing one or more names of the dead; each living tree represented members of our American society, or of our now global society, now lost to us.

I am not a resident of Duxbury, but am a frequent visitor and one of those who helped Ed Hardy build his elegant memorial. In my experience, few memorials convey the same kind of emotional power as his path through the Duxbury woods. As I walked through the result of this town's petty slashing of the ribbons, I felt as if I were walking through a graveyard empty of its headstones.

What will town officials do now to show us their deeper, quieter values?

Jason Anthony
Boothbay, Maine

Path was captivating

Editor, *Duxbury Clipper*:

The narrow path with low brush was about 200 feet long. The ribbons were all about four feet up the tall pines along each side of this path. Walking slowly through

this yellow ribbon wonder among the majestic pines was captivating. I am so grateful for this privileged experience.

Doris Prince
Enterprise Street

NEWSFLASH:
Round Pond threat
level elevated to
yellow!



SOUNDING OFF